Homer, Anna

March-April, 1975

The Pathological Laboratory,
University of Toronto.
March 20th 1915.

The President of the
University of Toronto.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed I beg to lay before you copies of three letters:-

(1) Written by me to Dr. Fitzgerald on Feb. 3rd.

I wish to draw your attention to the last paragraph as stating my position in seeking the interview of Jany.26th referred to in the earlier part of the said letter.

(2) Written by me to Dr. Fitzgerald on the 15th inst.

This letter,I think, requires no comment.

(3) Written by Dr.Fitzgerald to me on the 16th inst.

This letter also needs no comment.

It is with great regret that I lay this matter before you,but I do so for two reasons:-firstly,my appointments as Chemist to,and afterwards as Assistant Director of the Antitoxin Laboratories were made by the Board of Governors of the University but I am informed of my dismissal before the expiration of my contract time ,not by the Board of Governors but by Dr.Fitzgerald ; and secondly my professional honour is at stake and I must ask for a chance to vindicate myself.

I am,

Yours very truly,

Annie Fisher.

XXXXXXXXXX

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February 3rd, 1915.

Dr. J. G. Fitzgerald,

Department of Hygiene, University of Toronto.

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:-

It was obvious in our conversation on Tuesday last (January 26th) that you took a wrong view of what I said and regarded my words in the light of a threat to hold you up. As I explained to you then and as I wish to emphasize now there was no intention of a threat, ~~and~~ You must see that there could have been none as it is perfectly obvious that with your present methods any commercial undertaking in the preparation of antitoxin cannot compete with the University and at the same time expect to make a financial success of the concern.

A week has gone by since our interview and as I have heard nothing further from you I can but conclude that you are still taking the same attitude. I am therefore sending this statement to you as a means of vindicating my character as it is so easy for a person who is in an excited and angry state of mind to get ~~the~~ a wrong impression and to make use of it.

Copy of letter sent Feb. 3. 1915

Witnessed by
A. A. Fletcher.

XXXXXXXXXX

February 3rd, 1915.

Dr. J. C. Fitzgerald -----2-------

I need hardly point out that a few minutes consideration would have shown you that had I been guilty of the dishonourable conduct you implied I should hardly have attempted to hold you up so far ahead.

I again reiterate that my desire was to ascertain the attitude of the University if I became associated with any commercial undertaking of the kind on the termination of my appointment with the University, as I understand from what you said that the Department is considering the appointment of some one else at a cheaper rate of remuneration.

Yours truly,

(Signed) Annie Jones

ADDRESS REPLY TO
PROF. J. J MACKENZIE
DEPARTMENT OF
PATHOLOGY AND BACTERIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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March.15th 1915.

My dear Dr Fitzgerald,

On Jany. 26th, while in an angry and excited state of mind, you made certain implications against my honour and on these grounds you stated that you would not have me working again in the Antitoxin Laboratories.

On Feb.3rd, in vindication of my character and honour, I sent you a letter, a copy of which has been kept for future reference.

In the meantime you have neither withdrawn the accusations you made on Jany.26th, nor made any acknowledgement of my letter of Feb.3rd, nor have you notified me whether your stated intention of releasing me from my obligations to your department for the rest of my contract time was serious or otherwise.

During the course of this week I shall have satisfied the demands of the Research Committee with regard to the time owing them, and as I desire to make arrangements for the apportioning of my time from now onwards I must ask you for a definite statement of your intentions.

I am,

Yours truly,

(signed) Anne Fisher.

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COPY:

University of Toronto,
Department of Hygiene,
Toronto, Canada.
16 March, 1915.

Dr. A. Homer,
Department of Pathology & Bacteriology,
University of Toronto.

My dear Doctor Homer:-

Your letter of March 15th received.

Your further services will not be required by the Antitoxin Laboratory. You have given this laboratory approximately three and one half months time, by April 1st you will have given the Research Committee the same length of service. You would have therefore, in the ordinary course of ~~results~~ events, five months more to complete your year. Of this time two and one half months services would be rendered this laboratory. As I have already stated however your further services will not be required. You will receive your stipend for half time services as already stipulated until August 31st 1915, when your contract with this laboratory terminates.

Yours truly,

(Sgd.) J.G.FITZGERALD.

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Department of Pathological Chemistry.

March 20th 1915.

Dr. Fitzgerald,

My dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th inst. in which you state that my services are no longer required by the Antitoxin Laboratories.

I wish to point out to you that my contract was with the Board of Governors of this University and notice of my dismissal from the Antitoxin Laboratories before the expiration of my contract time must come from those who appointed me.

I have referred the matter to the President.

Yours truly,

Annie Fisher.

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Pathological Laboratory,
University of Toronto,
March 30th, 1915.

The President,

Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of March 27th which reached me yesterday.

From the text of your letter it is evident that you do not realize the seriousness of the bearing of the present situation on my future career, and it is for this reason that I am unable to accept, without protest, the form in which my dismissal from the Antitoxin Laboratories has been expressed.

My summary dismissal before the expiration of my contract can only be described as unjust and discourteous, and the reasons given by Dr. Fitzgerald to you, and accepted on your recommendation by the Board of Governors, are in my opinion neither a wholly true representation of the state of affairs, nor are they in strict accordance with the facts of the case.

From the time of my arrival in this city in September until December 18th my whole time was spent with the Department of Hygiene, since then I have been employed in Research Work and have not had any duties to fulfil in connexion with the antitoxin work.

An examination of the records of the laboratory will bear evidence as to whether my methods and attitude were detrimental to the progress of the work.

During my time with the Department of Hygiene, Dr. Fitzgerald expressed satisfaction with the way in which I was conducting the work, and also with the results achieved both as regards quantity and quality of the output, and he also stated his satisfaction when I was able to hand to him, prior to my leaving the laboratory to do research work, a supply of antitoxin which he considered sufficient to satisfy the demands of the laboratory for two months ahead.

Up to the time of my departure (December 18th), with the approbation of Dr. Fitzgerald, I was conducting the work, in the main essentials, on the lines laid down by him. Since then Dr. Fitzgerald may have made radical changes in the way in which he intends to conduct the production of antitoxins: if he has done so, no indication has been given me of the new methods he proposes to adopt, or of how they compare with those used before Christmas, with which he expressed satisfaction, and which I carried out in accordance with his wishes.

Whatever the new methods are it would have been my duty, so long as I remained Assistant Director of the Antitoxin Laboratories, to adopt them: as I have said before, I do not even know what they are.

I trust that I have made it evident that the reasons given in your letter do not adequately meet the facts of the case.

But besides the evidence of the laboratory records in my favour, there is the evidence of the letters which are already in your possession. An examination of their contents will show that I was threatened with dismissal on the evening of January 26th,

not on the grounds of my methods of work, but on the charge of dishonourable conduct.

My dismissal has been obtained but not on the grounds for which it was threatened, and the reasons that have been given for my removal do not represent a just view of the situation.

It is with regret that I am obliged to write to you thus, but my record and my testimonials, up to the present, have been good, and I cannot afford to allow any such incident as this to mar my future.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

Annie Jones.

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Department of Pathological Chemistry

University of Toronto.

March 31st 1915.

The President of the University,

Dear Sir,

I have returned to Dr Fitzgerald the key of the Antitoxin Laboratory which I held during the tenure of my office as Assistant Director.

In your letter of March 27th you mention that Dr Fitzgerald requires my room at once for Tetanus work. Does Dr Fitzgerald refer to the room kindly assigned to me by Professor Macallum for my own private use as a Research room and an office?

Out of consideration for me and so that I might be as near the Antitoxin Laboratories as possible, Professor Macallum made arrangements for me to have one of the rooms on the ground floor and in the North wing of the Medical building. I understood that I could have the room for the current year as there was no one, with a prior claim, by virtue of their connexion with the teaching work of his department, to the room.

Of course, if Professor Macallum has made other arrangements for the tenancy of the room, I will move my furniture, books and research materials, whereever he wishes me togo.

Up to the present I have been using a desk which is the property of the Department of Hygiene : the desk shall be emptied of its contents and returned to them during the course of the week end.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

Annie Porter

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April 7th 1915.

The President,

Dear Sir,

I understand that you wish me to return to you the original of your letter of March 27th and to destroy any copies of the letter that have been made .

I have ~~done~~ acted as requested.

As I am no longer engaged upon offical work in the Medical Building I am informing Dr Macallum that, if it will convenience him in any way for me to give up my room at once instead of at the end of the year, I will be pleased to ~~do so~~ make arrangements for the packing and removal of my goods as expeditiously as possible after being notified of his desires on the subject.

Thanking you for your courteous consideration in this matter,

I am ,

Yours very truly

Annie Jones

April 8th, 1915

Miss A. Homer,

Pathological Building,

University of Toronto.

Dear Miss Homer:

I have destroyed both the original of the letter that I sent to you on March 27 and the copy that I had kept in my office. I hope that this will see the end of the incident.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.

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Department of Pathological Chemistry,
University of Toronto.
April 21st 1915

Dear Mr President,

I am writing to ask you if you will kindly tell me by what date I shall have fulfilled my obligations to the University with regard to my attendance at the Laboratories.

The wording of my notice of appointment runs --- "for one year from Sep. 1. 1914" --- and does not specify whether the teaching year, the University year (to July 1st.) or the Calendar year is implied.

If the appointment runs to the end of the Calendar year may I be allowed to take the holiday to which I am entitled at the end of the time? From the point of view of my work (as the appointment is for one year) it would be better to work straight ahead with the problems under investigation rather than to submit them to the demoralising effect of a holiday in the middle of the summer & possibly in the middle of a series of experiments. Further, from my own point of view it would be much more satisfactory for me to work straight on, fulfil my contract and spend the holiday to which I am entitled in moving myself & my belongings to whatever place I decide to work in next year.

I am,
Yours sincerely
Anne Tower.

April 22nd, 1915

Miss Foster,

University of Toronto.

Dear Miss Foster:

Your appointment is as you say until the first of September, but the twelve months is supposed to include a month's holiday. I have spoken to Professor J. J. Mackenzie, and he agrees with me that if you wish to take your holiday in August you could complete your work more at the end of July.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.